

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION**

JOSE LUIS ALVAREZ-GOMEZ,)	
ID # 47850-177,)	
Movant,)	No. 3:17-CV-2560-B (BH)
vs.)	No. 3:14-CR-037-B (1)
)	
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
Respondent.)	Referred to U.S. Magistrate Judge

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to *Special Order 3-251*, this habeas case has been automatically referred for findings, conclusions, and recommendation. Based on the relevant findings and applicable law, the motion to vacate, set aside, or correct sentence should be **DENIED** as barred by the statute of limitations.

I. BACKGROUND

Jose Luis Alvarez-Gomez (“Movant”), a federal prisoner, challenges his 2014 conviction for unlawful reentry and 60-month sentence. (*See* doc. 2.)¹ Judgment was entered on September 24, 2014, and he did not appeal. (*See* doc. 29.) His § 2255 motion states that it was placed in the prison mailing system on September 12, 2017. (*See* 3:17-CV-2560-B, doc. 2 at 12.)

III. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

“[Section] 2255 establishes a ‘1-year period of limitation’ within which a federal prisoner may file a motion to vacate, set aside, or correct his sentence under that section.” *Dodd v. United States*, 545 U.S. 353, 356 (2005). It states:

A 1-year period of limitation shall apply to a motion under this section. The limitation period shall run from the latest of –

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent document numbers refer to the docket number assigned in the underlying criminal action, 3:14-CR-037-B (1).

- (1) the date on which the judgment of conviction becomes final;
- (2) the date on which the impediment to making a motion created by governmental action in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States is removed, if the movant was prevented from making a motion by such governmental action;
- (3) the date on which the right asserted was initially recognized by the Supreme Court, if that right has been newly recognized by the Supreme Court and made retroactively applicable to cases on collateral review; or
- (4) the date on which the facts supporting the claim or claims presented could have been discovered through the exercise of due diligence.

28 U.S.C. § 2255(f). Movant does not allege any facts that could trigger a starting date under §§ 2255(f)(2)-(4), so his limitations period began to run when his judgment of conviction became final. *See* § 2255(f)(1). His conviction became final on October 8, 2014, the date on which his time to file a direct appeal expired. *See* FED. R. APP. P. 4(b)(1)(A)(i) (stating that an appeal in a criminal case must be filed within fourteen days of the entry of judgment); *see also United States v. Plascencia*, 537 F.3d 385, 388 (5th Cir. 2008) (holding that, where a federal prisoner does not file a direct appeal, his conviction becomes final when his time to do so expires). The one-year limitations period expired in October 2015, so Movant’s § 2255 motion is untimely in the absence of equitable tolling.

“[T]he statute of limitations in § 2255 may be equitably tolled in ‘rare and exceptional circumstances.’” *United States v. Patterson*, 211 F.3d 927, 930 (5th Cir. 2000). “The doctrine of equitable tolling preserves a [party’s] claims when strict application of the statute of limitations would be inequitable.” *Davis v. Johnson*, 158 F.3d 806, 810 (5th Cir. 1998) (quoting *Lambert v. United States*, 44 F.3d 296, 298 (5th Cir. 1995)). It “applies principally where [one party] is

actively misled by the [other party] about the cause of action or is prevented in some extraordinary way from asserting his rights.” *See Coleman v. Johnson*, 184 F.3d 398, 402 (quoting *Rashidi v. Am. President Lines*, 96 F.3d 124, 128 (5th Cir. 1996)). In the context of a habeas petition filed by a state prisoner, the Supreme Court has stated that a habeas petitioner is entitled to equitable tolling only if he shows that: 1) he has been pursuing his rights diligently, and 2) some extraordinary circumstance prevented a timely filing. *Holland v. Florida*, 130 S.Ct. 2549, 2562 (2010), citing *Pace v. DiGuglielmo*, 544 U.S. 408, 418 (2005). “[E]quity is not intended for those who sleep on their rights.” *Covey v. Arkansas River Co.*, 865 F.2d 660, 662 (5th Cir. 1989). Furthermore, the movant bears the burden to show entitlement to equitable tolling. *Phillips v. Donnelly*, 223 F.3d 797, 797 (5th Cir. 2000) (per curiam). Courts must examine each case in order to determine if there are sufficient exceptional circumstances that warrant equitable tolling. *Fisher v. Johnson*, 174 F.3d 710, 713 (5th Cir. 1999).

Here, Movant presents no argument or evidence that extraordinary circumstances prevented him from filing his motion to vacate earlier. He argues that he did not present his claims earlier because he had no knowledge of the law, he is not fluent in English, and he could not find another person to help him prepare a § 2255 motion, but those are not proper grounds for equitable tolling. *See Felder v. Johnson*, 204 F.3d 168, 171-72 (5th Cir. 2000) (holding that ignorance of the law, a lack of knowledge of filing deadlines, a prisoner’s pro se status, and a lack of legal training do not support equitable tolling of AEDPA’s statute of limitations). And though Movant argues that his counsel failed to file a direct appeal as instructed in 2014, Movant does not explain why he did not diligently pursue his post-conviction rights until three years later. *See, e.g., Manning v. Epps*, 688 F.3d 177, 186 (5th Cir. 2012) (holding that a prisoner did not diligently pursue his post-conviction

rights when he “did nothing for more than nineteen months after his conviction became final.”). Because Movant has not met his burden to establish circumstances warranting equitable tolling, his motion to vacate should be denied as untimely.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The motion to vacate, set aside, or correct sentence should be **DENIED** with prejudice as barred by the statute of limitations.

SIGNED this 20th day of September, 2017.


IRMA CARRILLO RAMIREZ
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE AND NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL/OBJECT

A copy of these findings, conclusions and recommendation shall be served on all parties in the manner provided by law. Any party who objects to any part of these findings, conclusions and recommendation must file specific written objections within 14 days after being served with a copy. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). In order to be specific, an objection must identify the specific finding or recommendation to which objection is made, state the basis for the objection, and specify the place in the magistrate judge’s findings, conclusions and recommendation where the disputed determination is found. An objection that merely incorporates by reference or refers to the briefing before the magistrate judge is not specific. Failure to file specific written objections will bar the aggrieved party from appealing the factual findings and legal conclusions of the magistrate judge that are accepted or adopted by the district court, except upon grounds of plain error. See *Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass’n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996).


IRMA CARRILLO RAMIREZ
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE